

"I don't know of any that do," Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a conversation.

"You don't know much," said the Duchess; "and that's a fact."

Alice did not at all like the tone of this remark, and thought it would be as well to introduce some other subject of conversation. While she was trying to fix on one, the cook took the cauldron of soup off the fire, and at once set to work throwing everything within her reach at the Duchess and the baby—the fire-irons came first; then followed a shower of saucepans, plates, and dishes. The



Duchess took no notice of the things that hit her; and the baby was not hurt, though it was quite impossible to tell whether the blows hurt it or not.

"Oh, please mind what you are doing," Alice, jumping up and down, said to the cook. "Oh, there goes his precious head!" A very large saucepan flew through the air and carried it off.

"If everybody minded their own business," the Duchess said, in a hoarse voice, "the world would go round a deal faster than it does."

"Which would *not* be a bad thing," Alice said, who felt very glad to get a chance of saying something. "I am sure it would be, if it were only a little faster—say, only six months in the year. Then I could go round twice in the year—just as you do now—excepting a little of her knowledge, which she would make with her. I am sure she would see the earth takes twenty-four hours to go round on its axis——"

"Talking of axes," said the Duchess, "behead that cook!"

Alice glanced rather anxiously at the cook, to see if she meant to take any notice, but she was busily stirring the soup, and seemed not to be listening, so she went on. "I don't know what time of day it is—hours, I *think*; or is it twelve o'clock?"

"Oh, don't bother me."